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11 March 2026

Chair

Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee

Senedd Cymru

Cardiff Bay

Cardiff

CF99 1SN

Dear Delyth,

## **Public Service Broadcasting in Wales**

Thank you for your letter of 13 February 2026 and for the constructive and thoughtful scrutiny that the Committee continues to provide. We are grateful for the opportunity to respond to your further questions, and we appreciate the Committee's recognition of the progress made in strengthening the BBC's presence, investment and editorial distinctiveness in Wales over the past decade.

We also note your warm acknowledgement of Tim Davie's contribution to these developments during his tenure as Director General. We can assure the Committee that the BBC will seek to maintain this collaborative and constructive relationship with the Senedd and to continue prioritising the needs of Welsh audiences.

Our response addresses the areas upon which you have sought clarification. You will also note that the final section of our response summarises the BBC's Charter Green Paper response, published on 5 March. We hope that you and your successors in the Senedd find this helpful.

### **1. Content for Audiences in Wales**

The Committee has requested further clarity on our strategy for English-language television spend in Wales, particularly considering the year-on-year comparison with Scotland.

We fully recognise the importance of ensuring that audiences in Wales continue to see themselves, their communities and their stories reflected on screen. We also understand the Committee's concerns regarding spend levels and the need to maintain and grow investment wherever possible.

### **Context and constraints**

As we have explained previously, there are structural, operational and historical differences between the broadcasting ecology of Wales and Scotland. Scotland's dedicated television

channel was established with a specific funding settlement and remit that differs from the model currently in place for Wales.

Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the current comparison in English-language spend has prompted understandable questions, and we hope to address some of these concerns.

### **Commitments and forward plan**

Over the past five years, we have strengthened commissioning and production capability in Wales, supported an increasingly diverse creative sector, and expanded the range of genres produced locally. This has delivered very significant audience dividends with iPlayer viewing of Wales-related content increasing by 140% over three years - the fastest growth of all the devolved nations.

While annual fluctuations in content commissioning can occur because of production cycles, we are working internally to bring greater stability and long-term planning to our English-language television portfolio in Wales. Specifically, we have established a new buying model that will bring together our nations and network genre commissioning teams. From April, they will work as one team to increase our audience impact and simplify the way we work with our production partners, rooting decision-making for Welsh portrayal in Wales. In addition:

- We are planning a significant increase in English-language television portrayal spend for Wales. The first major change to support the implementation of this vision will see *Casualty* becoming a Wales-portrayal title from 2027 onwards.
- We will continue to assess and develop opportunities to commission more returning series from Wales, which in turn offer more predictable spend profiles and longer-term investment in local creative economies. In pursuit of this aim we have recently partnered with Creative Wales to co-fund the development of a major new factual entertainment series.
- We will provide the Committee with an annual update - as part of our regular accountability commitments - detailing progress and setting out the factors that have influenced spend levels.

We hope these measures provide assurance that we take the Committee's recommendation seriously and that our firm intention – despite a challenging financial picture for the whole of the BBC - is to move towards increasing the portrayal of Wales.

## **2. Network News and the Reporting of Devolution**

We welcome the Committee's continued scrutiny in this area, and we agree that accurate representation of devolved responsibilities across the UK is vital to public understanding and civic participation.

## **Editorial progress and challenges**

We are grateful for Professor Stephen Cushion's research, which we note with interest. His findings reinforce the importance of ensuring that network news output consistently distinguishes between England-only announcements, UK-wide policy, and the different choices made by devolved governments. Although we have made progress - including through training programmes, internal editorial guidance, locating staff in Cardiff and the creation of specific devolution explainers - we recognise that the Committee's concerns reflect real audience experience.

The BBC accepts that more can and should be done to ensure that the way we present political and public policy stories fully reflects the devolved nature of governance in the UK. We also acknowledge that this must extend beyond broadcast bulletins to include digital and social media, where headlines and short-form content can sometimes lack context.

## **Actions underway**

In line with the Committee's recommendations:

- Ahead of the forthcoming election, we will be continuing to brief network news teams and their senior editorial leaders on the practical implications of devolution and editorial accuracy.
- We are reviewing our digital and social media editorial workflows to ensure that headline-level content includes the required clarity when referring to devolved or England-only decisions.
- We are working across BBC News digital teams to improve tagging, structuring and metadata practices, enabling clearer signposting for audiences in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- We will invite Professor Cushion and other academic experts to present their most recent findings to senior BBC News leadership, ensuring that research insights are directly integrated into editorial practice.
- We are reviewing our digital and social media editorial workflows to ensure that headline-level content, wherever technically possible within the constraints of third-party platforms, includes the required clarity when referring to devolved or England-only decisions.

We fully agree with the Committee that accurate reporting of the structure of the UK is not merely an enhancement to public service content - it is a fundamental requirement of the BBC's Charter obligations.

## **3. Ongoing Engagement**

We appreciate the Committee's consideration of our submissions to both the Ofcom prominence consultation and the UK Government's Charter Review Green Paper, and we remain committed to contributing constructively to these processes. More broadly, we value

our ongoing engagement with the Committee - through evidence sessions, written updates, and operational visits - as we believe that sustained, open dialogue enhances accountability and supports better outcomes for audiences in Wales.

#### **4. BBC Charter**

As noted above, after our appearance before the Committee, the BBC published its Charter Green paper response. We would welcome opportunities to discuss the next steps in the Charter process with the next Senedd; ahead of any potential opportunity, we are attaching a summary of our public response, as well as a copy of our initial Green Paper response to inform future deliberations.

Kind regards,

Tim Davie, Director General

Rhuanedd Richards, Interim BBC Nations Director

Garmon Rhys, Interim Director of BBC Cymru Wales

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Enc.